

**April 19, 2016**

**Re: Comments on the Proposed Handschu Settlement**

Dear Honorable Judge

I have registered to file comments regarding the *Handschu* guidelines. As background, I am the director of the Church of Stop Shopping, a performance company based in New York City. We create satirical theater and non-violent creative actions in various settings, including theaters, churches and public spaces. We use creative strategies and non-violent action to illustrate the perils of overconsumption and the role of financial institutions in the crisis of the earth. We produce dynamic campaigns that enact our core values - participatory democracy, vibrant community and the impact of consumption on the Earth. We have performed all throughout Europe and the United States. Just last summer, we were honored to open for Neil Young in The Monsanto Years tour.

We also engage in Civil Disobedience. Among our core volunteers are scientists, teachers, artists, therapists, welders, cyclists, builders, developers, hair dressers, dog walkers, actors, truck drivers, tech geeks, scholars and executives representing a significant cross section of the general population. We have an open audition process, meaning that anyone who asks to join is given serious consideration. We are a racially and economically diverse group between the ages of 19-75. We often stage performance in public spaces and participate in vigils and parades, as well as permitted and un-permitted First Amendment protected rallies. Among our current programming is an attempt at mapping the use of the carcinogenic pesticide Roundup by the city of New York ( and other municipalities), via FOIA requests for data.

In 2004, we were tracked, monitored and reported on by the NYPD in the lead up to the Republican National Convention. We know this due to documents that were disclosed during the litigation surrounding the Republican National Convention. (Please see [http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/NYPD/searchable\\_RNC\\_docs.pdf](http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/NYPD/searchable_RNC_docs.pdf) ).

We strongly suspect that the tracking and monitoring that occurred in 2004 has continued. Whether this was electronic or physical surveillance is not clear but several of our events were preempted by police, meaning the NYPD were there when we arrived. On other occasions the corporation we were targeting with our joyful gospel music was locked and temporarily “closed” when we arrived.

I have read the guidelines as they will exist if this agreement is approved. I am not an attorney and find the wording of the guidelines a little difficult to digest. However, I believe that there are numerous shortcomings of these guidelines that could result in the NYPD infiltrating our group or allowing the NYPD to continue to track and monitor our activities with impunity. This seems wrong on so many levels. We are not criminals nor are we engaged in any criminal activity. Admittedly, we do seek to engage in civil disobedience. However, when our activities are ended before they have begun, it negatively impacts the future participation of our members. I fear that the continued authorization of the NYPD to infiltrate or track and monitor our group, even if we are not engaged in criminal activity, but are engaged in civil disobedience, affects individuals’ desire to participate in our activities and associate with our group. I believe both of these violate the First Amendment protections of the United States Constitution. I urge the Court to send the parties back to review and create better wording for these guidelines. The updated wording should severely restrict the NYPD’s ability to track and monitor peaceful groups protected by the First Amendment. Moreover, the language should not allow the NYPD to infiltrate peaceful activist or religious groups without some type of court approval. Simply put, nothing in the history of the NYPD suggests that they should



be allowed to self-police their own conduct when it comes to First Amendment groups and related activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Savitri D.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Savitri D.', written over the typed name.